

Setting and Its Roles

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

- Identify setting and the details that convey it
- Analyze the influence of setting on conflict

RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

You will need photocopies for students of:

- **Student Lesson Summary**, p. 70
- **Teaching Model**, “Older Run,” p. 71
- **Practice Worksheets**, Levels A and B, pp. 72–73
- **Reteaching Worksheet**, p. 74

You will also need:

- Transparency: **Graphic Organizer**, Setting

Teach

- 1. Setting:** Distribute the **Lesson Summary** and review the **Academic Vocabulary**. Explain that **setting** is the time and place in a story, drama, poem or other work.
- 2. Teaching Setting:** Ask a volunteer to recall a scene from a recently viewed film. Have the student tell *where* and *when* the action took place. Use the **Lesson Summary** to help students identify **setting** in a work. Explain the following steps:
 - **Ask Where:** Often early sentences give details of setting. In many stories, the action moves around from place to place.
 - **Ask When:** Details tell when the action takes place. Clothing or architecture may set the story in the past, present, or future; light and weather may reveal that the scene is morning or evening, winter or summer. Just as with place, time may change. Ask students: When might a story take place in which the main characters are riding on a wagon train? (*the past, the Old West, mid-1800s*)
 - **Ask How:** The setting often affects the story's plot by developing conflict, the main character's problem. Ask: How might setting affect a story about a child threatened by bullies? (*A park might be a refuge or a lawless wilderness.*) Point out that setting also affects mood and other story elements such as suspense.
- 3. Guided Practice:** Explain that writers do not always tell the time and place directly. Readers must use details from the story and their own experience or knowledge to **infer** the setting. Write the following sentence on the board and ask students what detail can help them infer that the setting is *night*.

“It was midwinter, clear, fifteen or twenty below, a full moon-absolutely beautiful.”

—from “Older Run,” Gary Paulsen

(The detail “full moon” shows that it is probably night.)

Distribute copies of the **Teaching Model**, from “Older Run.” Display the **Graphic Organizer** transparency. Have student volunteers help complete the organizer with their own answers and ideas about where and when the story is set.

SETTING AND ITS ROLES, CONTINUED

QUICK CHECK. Read the following passage aloud, and ask a volunteer to **infer** the setting.

Elena wished her father had stayed on the trail and had not tried this shortcut. She was sick of the sagebrush, stinging nettles, and July heat. If only they had a Global Positioning System!

(a wilderness trail in July, in the Southwest; in present time since GPS is mentioned)

Sample Answers: Graphic Organizer

Where: *real; outdoors; country (forest or woods); feel cold, smell pine and spruce, see snow, sled dogs, train trestle; It's difficult; people need to work hard to survive.*

When: *recent past, night, mid-winter, dog-sledding trek or journey, technology includes the wooden sled and steel brakes.*

Practice and Apply

Practice activities for determining setting appear on pp. 72–73.

- Assign **Practice Worksheet A** to students who need more structured activities.
- Assign **Practice Worksheet B** to grade-level and above-level students.

NOTE: Both Practice Worksheets require the **Teaching Model**, from “Older Run.”

Answer Key: Practice Worksheet A

1. a 2. d 3. a 4. d 5. b

Sample Answers: Practice Worksheet B

1. *The setting is a moonlit, winter night, very cold, in a region of snowy wilderness. The narrator is sledding along a trail behind his ten dogs, when he comes to a bridge over a river. Someone has removed the plywood from the trestle that supports the bridge.*
2. *The narrator is thrown from his sled when the dogs stop suddenly on the damaged bridge.*
3. *The setting is very important. In a city, in a place with no snow, or in summertime, the narrator would not have been dog sledding and could not have had this incident.*
4. *Yes, probably the setting will further complicate the rest of the story, since the narrator is out in the middle of nowhere on a very cold night, far from human help.*

Assess and Reteach

Use these guidelines to determine if students need the **Reteaching Worksheet**.

- **Practice Worksheet A:** Students should correctly answer items 1–3. Items 4 and 5 are more challenging.
- **Practice Worksheet B:** Student responses to items 1–3 should resemble the sample answers. Item 4 is more challenging.

SETTING AND ITS ROLES, CONTINUED

For students who need reteaching, review the **Lesson Summary** and **Academic Vocabulary**. Brainstorm new examples. Have them complete the **Reteaching Worksheet**, p. 74.

Answer Key: Reteaching Worksheet

1. *The action takes place in the future. Today, no people live anywhere else but on Earth.*
2. *The action takes place on some other planet, one with a poisonous atmosphere. The character is inside a structure, perhaps part of a space colony.*
3. *The setting creates the conflict by making the failure serious. A minor valve problem in this setting can prove fatal; in another place, this wouldn't be the case.*